

# U.S. Mackerel Exports on the Rise in Nigeria and Eastern Europe



By Joel Chetrick

Exports of mackerel from the United States increased sharply during the first six months of calendar 2003 to Nigeria, Bulgaria and Romania. Exports to Nigeria totaled 9,023 metric tons, and exports to Bulgaria and Romania totaled 3,715 tons and 2,846 tons, respectively.

Compared with the 2002 12-month exports, 2003 volumes increased by 80 percent to Nigeria, nearly 200 percent to

Bulgaria and 732 percent to Romania. Export values for the 2003 January-June period totaled \$5.5 million to Nigeria, \$2.6 million to Bulgaria and nearly \$2 million to Romania.

## Reasons Behind the Rise

Industry members state that Atlantic mackerel from suppliers in the Northeast has become well known and accepted in these markets. With abundant local fishery stocks, Atlantic mackerel from the United States is price competitive relative to product from northern European suppliers (such as Norway, Scotland and Ireland), whose catches have been constrained by quotas.

Due to the large size of the Nigerian and East European markets, the trade believes there is room for further sales growth and market share gains for U.S. product.

## Room for Expansion

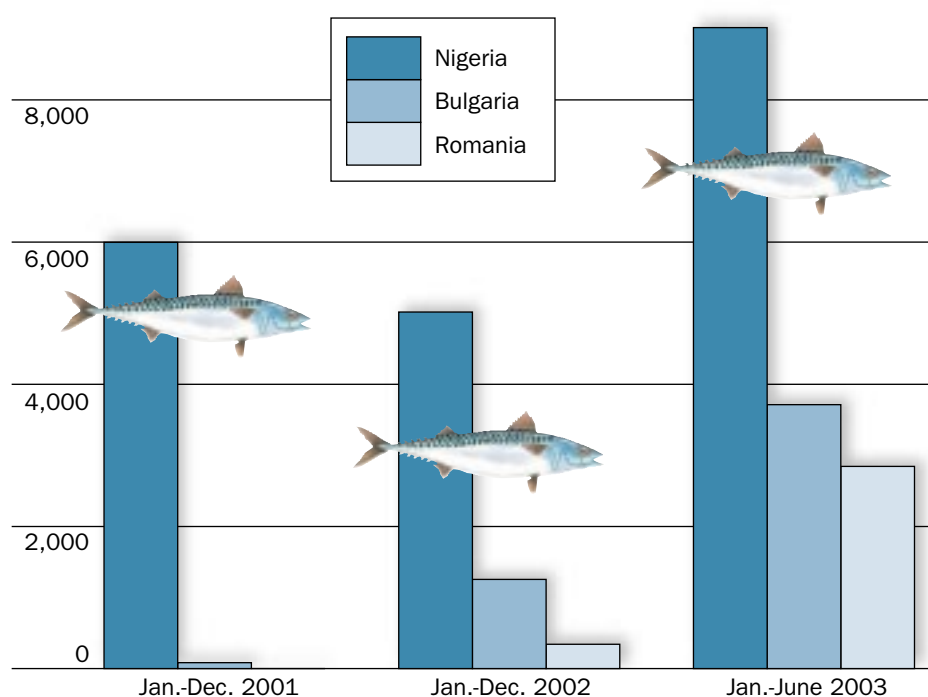
Processors of Atlantic mackerel are optimistic about the development of other East European markets as well, including Lithuania and Latvia, as a result of participating in recent marketing activities coordinated by the American Seafood Institute, a trade association in USDA's Market Access Program. Through participation in trade shows and trade missions, the companies have developed valuable buyer contacts and gained significant exposure for Atlantic mackerel from the United States.

Expectations of long-term sales growth have prompted new plant construction by some seafood processors in the Northeast. ■

## Nigeria, Bulgaria and Romania Are Now the Top Export Growth Markets for U.S. Atlantic Mackerel

Metric tons

10,000



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For additional information, contact the **American Seafood Institute**, which promotes all U.S.-caught fish and shellfish, excluding Alaska and catfish products.

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